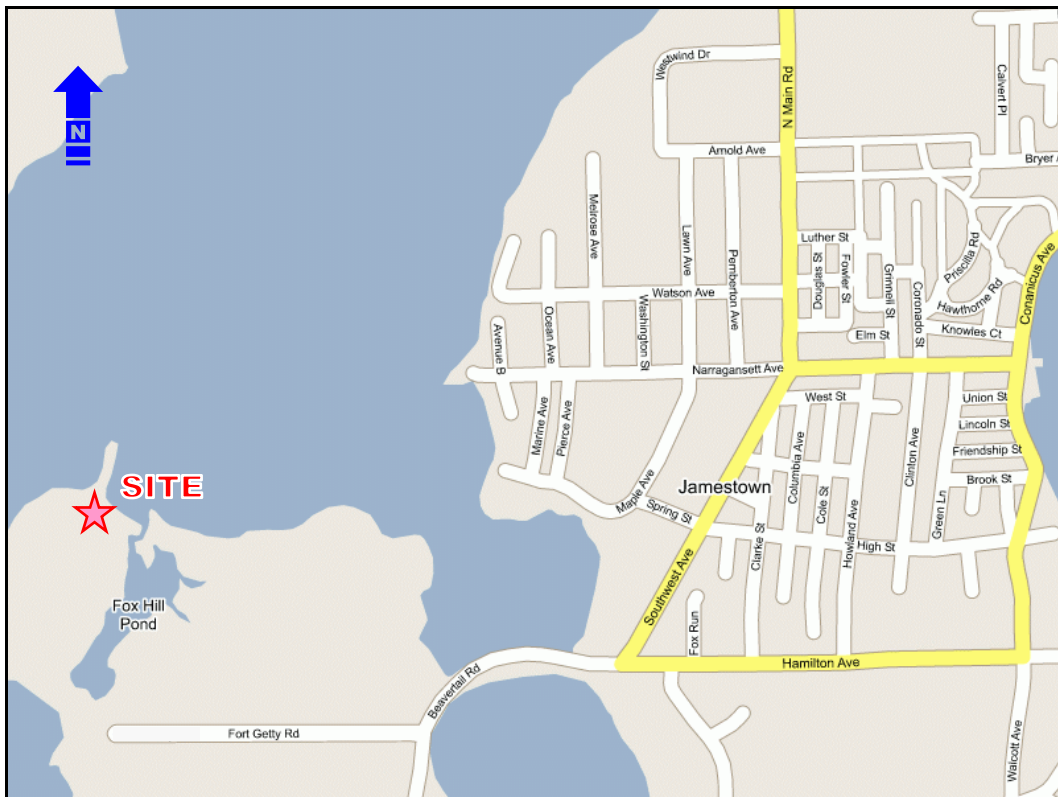


Site No. 15

## FORT GETTY

Jamestown  
Fort Getty Road



## FORT GETTY

### Site Description

Fort Getty Park is a town-owned recreation facility located along the West Passage shoreline in Jamestown. Used primarily for camping (both tents and recreation vehicles), this 41-acre park is operated and maintained by the Jamestown Department of Parks and Recreation. Facilities within the park are generally geared to complement camping use and include a basketball court, a boat launch, restrooms and showers, a large picnic/event shelter, and a small dock along the northerly shoreline from which fishing is most often conducted. The park is open seasonally for camping (mid-May through early October), during which there is a parking fee of \$15 for non-resident vehicles entering for day use.

### Location Assessment

**Bay Location.** The site is located within the West Passage of Narragansett Bay, approximately 2¼ miles south of the Jamestown Bridges. Dutch Island lies within the center of the passage at this location (see nautical chart image), and the main navigation channel runs west of this island. Water uses east of Dutch Island and in the vicinity of Fort Getty Park consist primarily of small craft boating and sailing associated with Dutch Harbor. These uses are supported within the park by a boat launch (see Photo 8), from which personal watercraft (jet-skis) were also observed being launched. As the channel side of the park is characterized by a steep, rocky shoreline, fishing use of the site is focused at the timber dock at the end of a small peninsula extending into the bay along the northerly shoreline (see aerial photo, Photos 1-6). Use of this facility is shared by fishing and boat landing uses (Photos 3, 5), and the structure is posted with signs restricting fishing to the westerly and northerly sides.



The West Passage offers excellent recreational species richness (see Appendix C). As reported in the Online Recreational Fishing Survey, Striped Bass, Bluefish, Summer Flounder, and Scup are all well represented spring through fall, with Tautog, Black Sea Bass, Weakfish, and Winter Flounder also reported in this region of the Bay. Anglers were fishing for Summer Flounder at the time of site visit in late August. Waters in the vicinity of this site were assessed as fully meeting aquatic life support criteria and are also open to shellfishing year-round. These waters have been designated a water quality goal of SA(b) by the RIDEM due to the close proximity of a seasonal mooring field (see Appendix B).

**Land Location.** Fort Getty Park is located along the northwesterly point of the Beavertail peninsula, which itself comprises the southernmost portion of the island of Jamestown. Beavertail is linked to the rest of Jamestown by a narrow stretch of land, along which Beavertail Road is flanked by Mackerel Cove Beach to the south and the Sheffield Cove salt marsh to the north. Visitors coming to the site (from North Kingstown via the Jamestown-Verrazano Bridge or from Newport via the Claiborne Pell Bridge) must pass through the town center, though traffic

along local roads is generally not problematic given the rural character of the island community. While RIPTA buses provide regular service to Jamestown, the site is approximately 1.5 miles from the nearest stop at the town center.

Fort Getty Park serves primarily as a campground facility, offering seasonal camping for recreation vehicles (RVs) and nightly camping for both RVs and tenting. The remains of old military fortifications (Fort Getty) are located along the southerly shoreline of the park. Other land uses along Beavertail consist mainly of low-density residential and lands designated for open space conservation. The southernmost tip of Beavertail (Beavertail Point) is the site of Beavertail State Park, which also offers excellent opportunities for shoreline fishing.

*Environmental Constraints and Permitting.* Coastal features at the small dock from which fishing is currently conducted consist of the beaches which flank the approach (see Photos 7, 8). Coastal waters in this vicinity are designated by the CRMC as Type 1 (Conservation Area), and eelgrass is known to exist in this area. The Fox Hill Salt Marsh is located to the immediate southeast of this area and is held in trust by the Audubon Society of Rhode Island (see aerial photo).

### Facilities Assessment

As previously noted, fishing use of the Fort Getty site is supported by a small L-shaped dock and the northerly reach of the park. The fixed structure is in fair condition and exhibits signs of moderate wear from use and exposure. This structure is accessed by a small gangway (Photo 5), which itself is in fair condition and marginally wheelchair-accessible. As an ancillary recreation activity to camping use of the park, fishing use of the dock was comprised mainly of camping visitors of the site. Anglers interviewed at the time of site visit noted that use of the structure is often near capacity and can get particularly crowded on weekends during the summer months. While all were generally satisfied with both the quality of the fishing at the site and the access afforded by the structure, non-camping anglers expressed dissatisfaction with the current condition of access to and parking at the site.

A major limitation to fishing use of the site is the fee policies in effect during the camping season (mid-May through early October), which generally coincides with the fishing season in this area of the Bay. While standard fees apply to RV and tent uses of the site, non-residents must pay a fee of \$15 to park at the site for the day (day visitors must exit the site by 10 p.m.). Conversely, Jamestown residents may purchase a resident sticker for \$15 which allows access to the park for the entire season. There are no viable parking alternatives beyond the site, as the park entrance gate is approximately 1 mile from the park dock. Although this non-resident parking fee may seem exorbitant, it does effectively serve to inhibit overcrowding/overuse of the fishing feature and ensure that this prime attraction remains accessible to the park's camping user base. Furthermore, space for visitor/angler parking within the park is limited and is shared by use of the boat launch (Photos 1, 8).

Facilities supporting camping uses within the interior of the park are generally well-maintained and in good condition. The camping area (Fox Hill) is noticeably devoid of trees, and there is no shade within ¼ mile of the fishing dock. The dock area also does not appear to be as regularly maintained as other park facilities; the trash receptacle serving the dock was overfilled at the time of visit, and certain areas of the deck are in need of minor repairs.

### Existing Site Conditions

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
<i>Existing Fishing Facilities</i>			X	
<i>Parking</i>		X		
<i>Compatibility with Surrounding Land / Water Uses</i>		X		
<i>Statewide Transportation Accessibility / Public Transit</i>		X		
<i>Site Aesthetics</i>			X	
	Low	Medium	High	
<i>Water Quality (see Appendix B)</i>			X	

#### Priority for Capital Improvements: **Low**

Given the existing use of Fort Getty Park as a campground and the current fee restrictions associated with its use, the State's need for improved public shoreline fishing access would be better served through capital improvements at other, more readily accessible locations. In its current operation, the site does not offer viable shoreline fishing access opportunities to out-of-town residents due to the high fees required for parking. Fishing facilities are however a key element of the overall enjoyment of the site by its camping user base; given that the capacity of site is limited (in both parking and fishing spots), the fees which inhibit fishing use by non-campers ensure that this recreational opportunity remains accessible for campers. Forty Getty Park would also be limited in its potential for the expansion of fishing facilities, as the environmental constraints of this shoreline location would likely preclude the extension of the existing structure or the construction of a new pier.





**Photo 1.** Interior park road looking north to dock and boat ramp. Parking for fishing use is available on the left.



**Photo 2.** Entrance to dock. Handicap parking is permitted at this as there are no other accessible spots in the immediate vicinity.



**Photo 3.** Typical dock use including fishing and boat landing.



**Photo 4.** Gangway to dock.





**Photo 5.** Fishing from dock. The trash receptacle in the photo is noticeably overfilled.



**Photo 6.** Looking back to Fort Getty Park from dock. Harbor uses are to the left, camping sites are along Fox Hill to the right.



**Photo 7.** Channel side beach (foreground) and RV camping area looking south.



**Photo 8.** Fort Getty boat launch and Dutch Harbor looking northeast.